

July 24, 2025

Somis Municipal Advisory Committee Meeting

Recent and Upcoming Planning Projects that may Enhance Revenue Sources from Agricultural/Open Space Lands



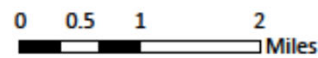
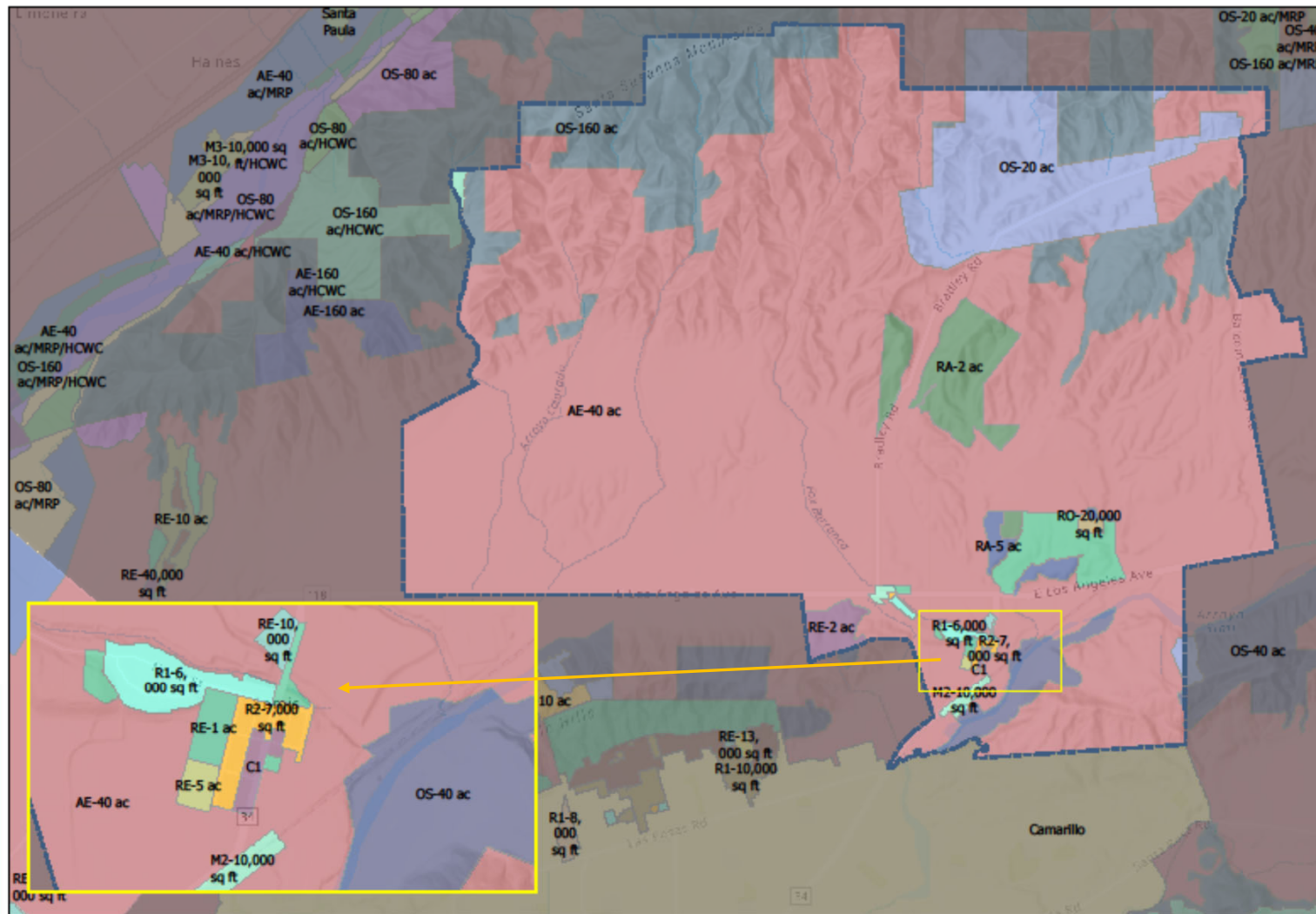
Resource Management Agency, Planning Division

Dave Ward, Planning Director & Aaron Engstrom, Planning Manager

Presentation Overview



- Locally Grown Food Processing Ordinance / SOAR
- Battery Energy Storage
- Agricultural Tourism Program



Somis MAC

Ventura County Zoning Designations
Within the Somis Municipal
Advisory Council (MAC) Boundary



Locally Grown Food Processing

Background and Discussion



- 1998 – Ventura County voters adopted SOAR until 2020
 - 2016 – SOAR was extended until 2050
-

General Plan requires that changes to land use designations, goals and policies regarding open space, agricultural, and rural lands be approved by a vote of the people at a countywide election.

Background and Discussion

SOAR language:

To preserve the maximum amount of land in agricultural production as possible, the processing of food beyond the limits currently allowed by Ventura County's general plan and policies should take place in existing urban areas that have appropriate supporting infrastructure.

*Notwithstanding the foregoing limitations on the Board of Supervisors, in order **to support the processing of locally grown food, before January 1, 2030 the Board of Supervisors may, without a vote of the people, re-designate up to a total of 12 acres of land**, dispersed throughout the County, provided they comply with the following conditions:*

- i) The Board has amended the appropriate provisions of the County's General Plan and other planning policies, and the amendment(s) conform with state laws governing such land use designations.*
- ii) The Board finds the re-designation will allow for the processing of locally grown food that would otherwise likely be transported out of county for processing.*
- iii) **The re-designated land is no greater than 3 acres in size and does not require the expansion of new sewer lines to the facility.***
- iv) The Board approved the action with at least four of the five Supervisors voting in the affirmative."*

Legislative Amendments Completed in 2024

- Added a new use category to the NCZO for the “processing of locally grown food” in the OS, AE, and RA Zones to make consistent with SOAR Ordinance.
- Added new General Plan Policy to Economic Vitality Element to make consistent with SOAR Ordinance and the related NCZO amendments.
- Added specific use standards for the “processing locally grown food” to the NCZO to meet the conditions of SOAR and the General Plan policies pertaining to the preservation of agricultural and biological resources.

Existing Non-Coastal Zoning Regulations

Preliminary Processing



Basic activities and operations, such as washing, trimming, packing, and storing agricultural products (as defined in NCZO).

Food Processing



Act of changing an agricultural product from its natural state to a different form such as milk to cheese (not defined in NCZO).

Background and Discussion

Preliminary Processing

Existing Regulations NCZO Section 8105-4

	OS- REC	OS	AE	RA	RE	RO	R1	R2	RPD	RHD	TP	TRU
AGRICULTURE AND AGRICULTURAL OPERATIONS												
Crop and Orchard Production (6,12,42,54)	Exempt (See Sec. 9600 et seq. of the Ventura County Ordinance Code for regulations pertaining to industrial hemp cultivation.)											
Packing, Storage Or Preliminary Processing Involving No Structures	E	E	E	E	E						E	

Not Allowed	Exempt	Approved by Planning Director or Designee	Approved by Planning Commission	Approved by Board of Supervisors
-------------	--------	---	---------------------------------	----------------------------------

Background and Discussion

Preliminary Processing Existing Regulations NCZO Section 8105-4

	OS-REC	OS	AE	RA	RE	RO	R1	R2	RPD	RHD	TP	TRU
other trees	E	E	E	E	E						E	
 Principal Structures Related To Agriculture (Greenhouses, Hot Houses, <u>Structures for Prelim. Packing, Storage and Preservation of Produce & Similar Structures</u> ; Cumulative GFA Per Lot) Except Agricultural Shade/Mist Structures * (See Sec. 8106-6.4 & 8107-20) (15)												
Up to 1,000 sq. ft. (6)	ZC	ZC	ZC	ZC	ZC						ZC	
Over 1,000 sq. ft. to 20,000 sq. ft. (15)	ZC	ZC	ZC	CUP								
Over 20,000 sq. ft. to 100,000 sq. ft.	CUP	CUP	CUP	CUP		Not Allowed	Exempt	Approved by Planning Director or Designee	Approved by Planning Commission	Approved by Board of Supervisors		
Over 100,000 sq. ft. (6)	CUP	CUP	CUP									

Background and Discussion

Food Processing Existing Regulations

NCZO Section 8105-5

	CO	C1	CPD	M1	M2	M3
MANUFACTURING INDUSTRIES						
Food And Related Products				CUP	PD	PD
Alcoholic Beverages						PD
Bakery Products				PD	PD	PD
Meat, Seafood And Poultry Packing Plants					CUP	CUP
Slaughtering; Refining And Rendering Of Animal Fats And Oils						CUP
Sugar Refining						CUP

Approved NCZO Amendments

Approved Amendments NCZO Section 8105-4 (Land Use Matrix)

	OS- REC	OS	AE	RA	RE	RO	R1	R2	RPD	RHD	TP	TRU
<u>Processing of Locally Grown Food *</u>												
<u>Up to 20,000 sq. ft. in area</u>		<u>ZC</u>	<u>ZC</u>	<u>CUP</u>								
<u>not meeting standards of sections 8107 -50.3.2(b)</u>		<u>CUP</u>	<u>CUP</u>	<u>CUP</u>								
<u>Over 20,000 sq. ft. to 3 acres in area</u>		<u>CUP</u>	<u>CUP</u>	<u>CUP</u>								
<u>Slaughterhouses, meatpacking and fish processing plants</u>		<u>CUP</u>	<u>CUP</u>	<u>CUP</u>								
<u>Requiring a new package sewage treatment plant for wastewater</u>		<u>CUP</u>	<u>CUP</u>	<u>CUP</u>								

Approved NCZO Amendments

NCZO Article 7 – Specific Use Standards

Approved ordinance has four parts:

- Part 1: Exclusions
- Part 2: Standards that apply to all facilities.
- Part 3: Standards that only apply to facilities allowed by Zoning Clearance.
- Part 4: Standards that apply to facilities allowed with a discretionary permit.

Approved NCZO Amendments

Part 2: Standards that apply to all facilities

One facility per legal lot and shall not exceed a total of 3 acres in size

Counted toward 3 acres:

- Buildings and structures
- Equipment areas
- Parking and loading areas, and
- Employee parking



Approved NCZO Amendments

Part 2: Standards that apply to all facilities, continued

- Agricultural products produced or grown on the subject lot or locally grown as verified by the Agricultural Commissioner
- 12 cumulative net acres countywide limitation (Planning Division will track the net acres countywide.)
- No proposed above or below ground improvements shall result in the direct or indirect loss of soils classified as “Prime,” “Statewide Importance,” and/or “Unique.”
- No expansion or extension of new sewer lines.
- Compliance with Land Conservation Act (LCA) Contracts

Approved NCZO Amendments

Part 3: Standards that apply to facilities allowed by Zoning Clearance

- Shall comply with all general standards of Part 2.
- Shall not exceed 20,000 sq. ft. in area.
- No proposed above or below ground improvements shall result in the direct or indirect impacts on native vegetation. Removal of native vegetation to accommodate a new food processing facility is prohibited.

Approved NCZO Amendments

Part 4: Standards that apply to facilities allowed with a discretionary permit

- Shall comply with all general standards of Part 2.
- Permit approval findings in the NCZO for a food processing facility.



Battery Energy Storage

What is a Battery Energy Storage System (BESS)?



Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS)



Acre limitation

- Codify Director Determination as Energy Production from Renewable Resources
- 100 Acre Limitation in OS, AE, and RA zones

Energy Road Map (Underway)

- Permit Simplification
- Accessory Uses
- Renewable Energy Restriction Overlay for Naval Base VC
- Evaluation of an OS, AE, Lot Coverage Exception
- Includes BESS, Solar, EV Charging Stations, Microgrids

NCZO Amendments – 100 Acre Limitation



- Cumulative acreage
- Combined Areas of OS, AE, and RA zones
- Only approved projects count toward the limitation

Project Area – Included

- Energy storage modules
- Accessory equipment and structures
- Substations
- Internal circulation routes

Project Area – Excluded

- Ingress/Egress Access Road



Battery Energy Storage - Approved Project

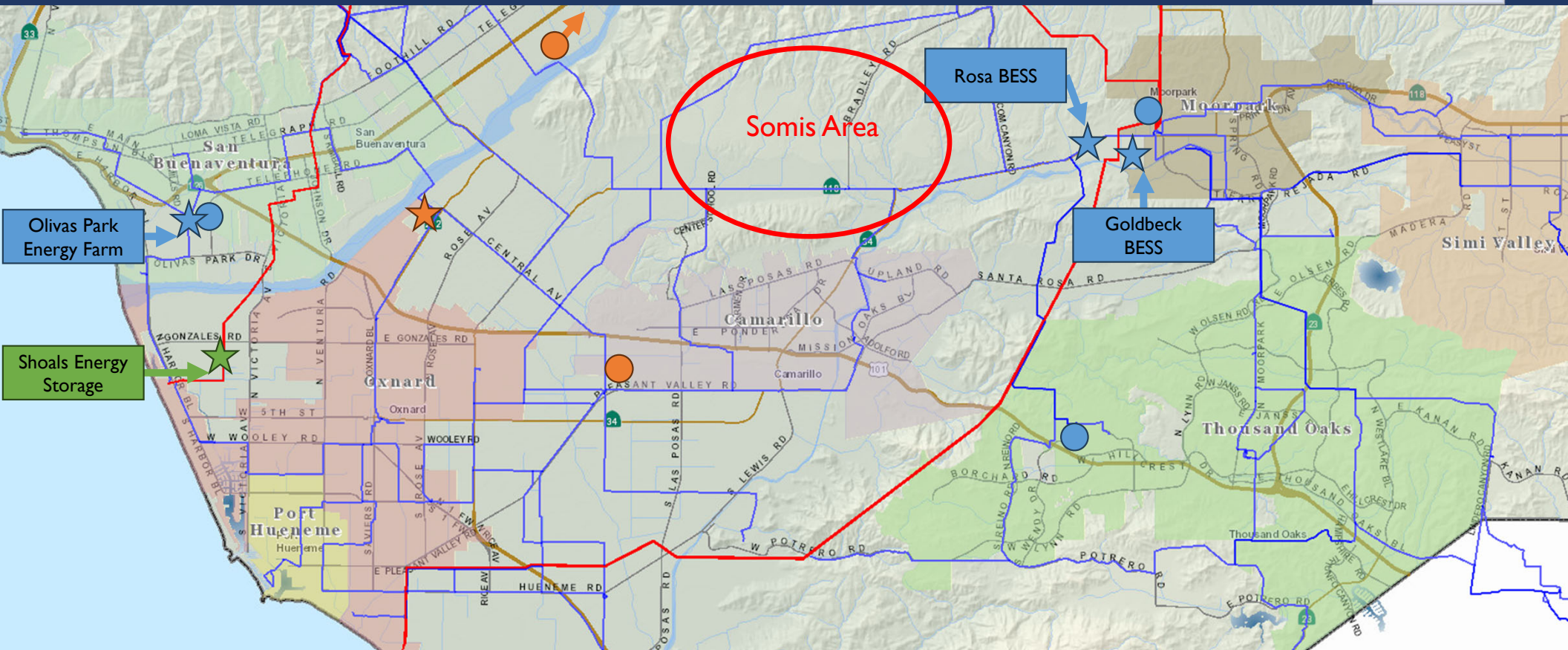


■ Shoals Battery Energy Storage

- Approved December 19, 2024
- 19.44 acres and 400 MW



City & County BESS Status Map



Projects in **Unincorporated County**

Projects in a **City**

Transmission Line Voltage Class

★ Existing ★ Potential ★ Approved

○ Existing ○ Potential

— High — Low



Agricultural Tourism

What is Agritourism?



“A commercial enterprise at a working farm or ranch conducted for the enjoyment and education of visitors that generates supplemental income for the owner or operator.” -University of California Agriculture & Natural Resources (UCANR)

Supporting the Agricultural Sector



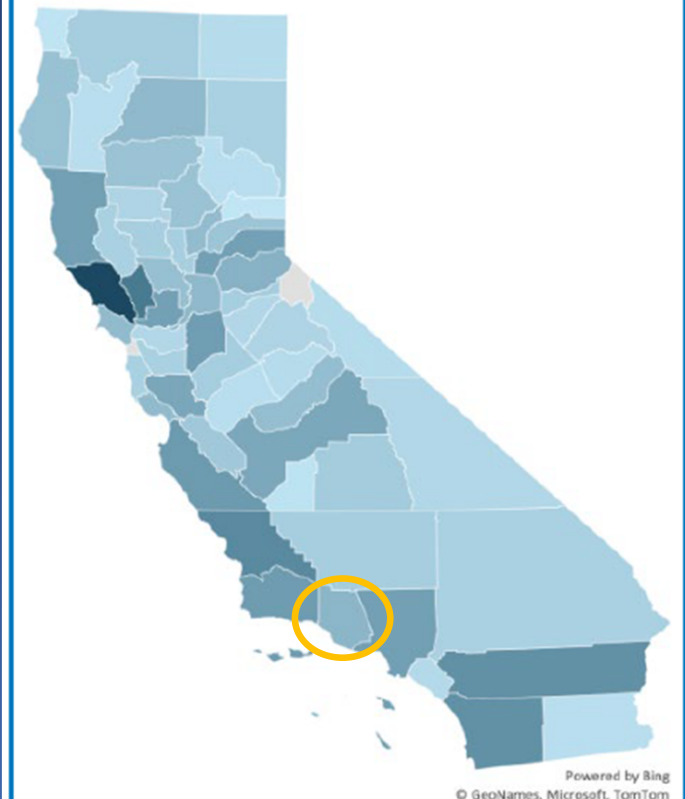
- It's estimated CA has 2,000+ farms and ranches with an element of agritourism
- The State has identified agritourism in the Central Coast as a development priority or asset in Strategic Tourism Plan

Map showing number of farms offering agritourism in CA Counties created UCANR using 2022 Ag Census Data. Deeper blues mean more agritourism is present in those Counties.



2022 Census of Agriculture

Number of Farms Offering Agritourism

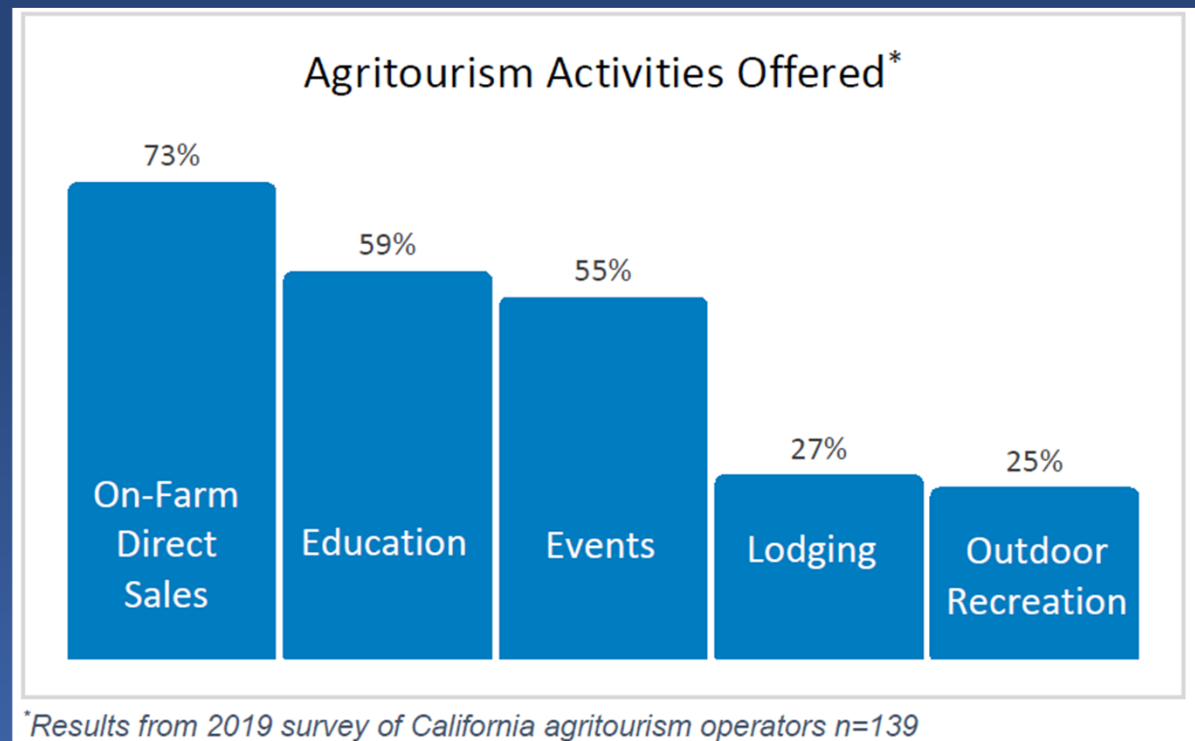


Supporting the Agricultural Sector (continued)



- \$100,000,000 industry in 2022
- In general, more than one activity is offered per farm or ranch

This bar graph is from a statewide survey of California agritourism operators completed by UC ANR in 2019
California Overview.



General Plan Program AG-D



AG-D Agricultural Tourism Development Standards

"The County shall revise the Non-Coastal Zoning Ordinance to include regulations and development standards for agricultural tourism *while protecting both the grower and the public*. Ordinance revisions may also include additional development standards for agricultural promotional uses, if necessary."



Project Themes



- Placemaking
- Specialty Agriculture
- Ranches & Farms
- Food Security
- Economic Vitality
- Educational Opportunities
- Health and Wellness



Supporting Agriculture via Compatible Strategies

Preliminary Processing



U Pick



Food Processing



Educational Activities



Placemaking



- Lighting and Signage
- Non-advertising Murals
- Fences and Gates



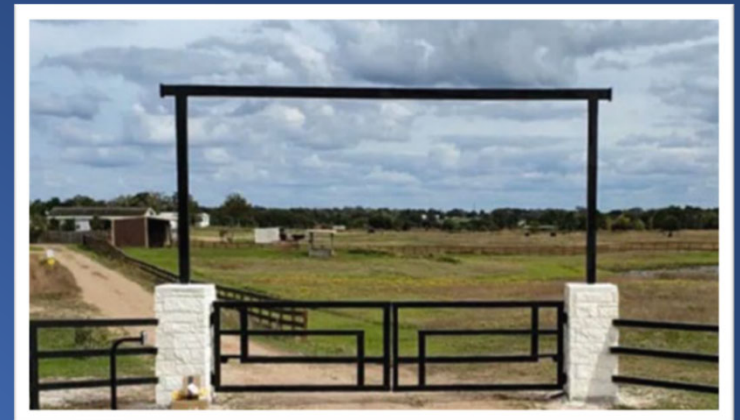
Placemaking (Continued)



Gates Entrances

- Minimum of 20 feet from front or street-side property line
- Allowed up to 20 feet in height
- Includes pilasters, columns, arches, vertical beams, and decorative elements

Code amendment tentatively set for Board review September 16, 2025



Farm Stays & Other Overnight Accommodations



- Accommodations such as Farm stays and B&B's typically utilize existing structures
- Can apply to ranch lands/open space and farmlands
- May involve multiple County agencies to study new or expanded activities

What Might Work? Why or Why Not?



Farm stays



Education



Farm to Fork



On Farm Direct Sales

General Plan Program AG-D



AG-D Agricultural Tourism Development Standards

"The County shall revise the Non-Coastal Zoning Ordinance to include regulations and development standards for agricultural tourism *while protecting both the grower and the public*. Ordinance revisions may also include additional development standards for agricultural promotional uses, if necessary."



Supporting Policies



AG-3.I Locally Owned and Specialty Products

- "The County should encourage locally owned (Ventura County) farms and ranches, the *growing of specialty products and innovative and high-value crops*, and *specialized animal facilities and rearing methods*."

AG-4.I Connections to Local Produce

- "The County shall strive to enhance access to and consumption of fresh, local produce by encouraging direct connections between local farmers/ranchers and markets, restaurants, institutions, schools, hospitals, food banks, and other businesses."



AG-4.5 Certified Farmers' Markets and Community Supported Agriculture

- "The *County shall support certified farmers' markets, community supported agriculture (CSAs) operations*, and other similar activities, by working with local communities, local agricultural groups, and the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) Certified Farmers Market Program, particularly in communities that are underserved by healthy food purveyors."

Supporting Policies



EV-1.5 Supporting Tourism

- "The County shall encourage the *development of sustainable and innovative visitor-serving attractions that expand on the tourism market* in Ventura County and add to the quality of life for residents. This would include identifying *viable locations for new or expanded accommodations* in the unincorporated areas of Ventura County and *support for ecotourism* associated with the Santa Monica Mountains, Los Padres Forest, the Channel Islands, and other natural areas."

EV-2.1 Agricultural Diversification

- "The County should encourage the growth and expansion of new, innovative agricultural-related business opportunities, including technological advancements in irrigation, crop production and pest control, new crop types, and *agritourism*, and *"farm-to-table"* programs and events."

Notifications



- Energy Roadmap hearings before end of the year
- Agritourism kicks off in the Fall
- Sign up for notifications!